

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 01058 01 OF 02 071402Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBOE-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 AID-05
STE-01 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
ICAE-00 MED-02 AF-10 PER-01 /065 W
-----039640 071422Z /47

O 071320Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6514
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1058

JOINT STATE/AID

FOR ARA/MGT, A/FBO, A/ALS, A/OPR; CARACAS FOR RSO;
SANTO DOMINGO FOR RMO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOCI, ENRG, ABUD, SWEL, GY, AFSP, ABLD, ASUP, ASEC, APER
SUBJECT: BREAKDOWN IN GUYANA'S ESSENTIAL SERVICES

REF: GEORGETOWN 1015 (NOTAL)

1. INTRO: WE ARE NOW WELL INTO THE SIXTH DAY OF THE POWER CRISIS
WHICH HAS AFFECTED THE ENTIRE CITY OF GEORGETOWN AND EN-
VIRONS. DOWNTOWN SECTION OF THE CITY HAS BEEN COMPLETELY
BLACKED OUT DURING THE LAST 60 HOURS FOLLOWING ON A PERIOD
OF INTERMITTENT BLACK-OUT DURING MONDAY AND TUESDAY.

2. THE GOVERNMENT HAS FORMED A TASK FORCE HEADED BY
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MINISTERS KING (TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION) AND HUBERT
JACK (ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES) TO COPE WITH THE
CRISIS WHICH HAS BROUGHT COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY TO A STAND-
STILL AND REDUCED PRODUCTION THROUGHOUT THE MANUFACTUR-
ING SECTOR TO A TINY FRACTION OF NORMAL.

3. DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF CANADIAN AND BRITISH

EXPERTS (THE GENERATING EQUIPMENT IS OF CANADIAN AND BRITISH ORIGIN) IN COUNTRY WHO HAVE FLOWN IN SINCE SUNDAY, THERE IS AS YET NO PROGNOSIS AS TO WHEN SERVICE MAY BE RESTORED TO ANYTHING APPROACHING NORMAL. DURING NIGHT OF APRIL 6-7 MOST OF THE CITY WAS BLACKED OUT CONTINUOUSLY. ONE SUBURB IN WHICH SOME MISSION PERSONNEL LIVE HAD SERVICE RESTORED BRIEFLY, BUT THIS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY INTERRUPTED AT 4 A.M. THIS MORNING. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AND ADJACENT AREA WHICH INCLUDES RESIDENCES OF ADMIN OFFICER AND GSO HAVE HAD NO POWER AND VIRTUALLY NO WATER FOR THE LAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

4. WATER HAS BECOME AN EQUALLY CRITICAL PROBLEM. WITHOUT POWER THE CITY'S PUMPS ARE NOT PUSHING WATER THROUGH THE MAINS AND THIS SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE LOW WATER LEVEL AT THE CITY'S RESERVIOR (DUE TO AN EXTENDED DROUGHT IN THE GEORGETOWN AREA) WHICH HAS ONLY ENOUGH WATER FOR "ANOTHER COUPLE OF WEEKS" ACCORDING TO SECRETARY OF THE WATER CONSERVANCY. SOME MAINS HAVE BEEN BROKEN INTO IN A DESPERATE SEARCH FOR WATER BY GUYANESE CITIZENS.

5. EVEN BEFORE THE MASSIVE POWER FAILURE LAST SUNDAY, THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GUYANA ELECTRIC COMPANY HAD WARNED THAT THERE WOULD BE FROM TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS OF REGULAR LOAD-SHEDDING. REGARDLESS OF HOW MUCH SUCCESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE GOVERNMENT'S TASK FORCE AND ITS FOREIGN ADVISERS ACHIEVE IN RESTORING SERVICE BACK TO NORMAL, WE MUST, THEREFORE LOOK FORWARD TO A PERIOD OF SHARPLY DIMINISHED SERVICE OVER THE NEXT ONE TO TWO YEARS. BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL TO FOCUS IMMEDIATELY ON THE PROBLEM AND MAKE PLANS TO COME UP WITH A REALISTIC PLAN FOR COPING WITH MISSION SHORT AND LONG TERM NEEDS BOTH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OPERATING EFFICIENCY AND EMPLOYEE MORALE. TO ACHIEVE THIS WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS: (A) IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF A GENERATOR FOR THE EMBASSY: THE 12-YEAR-OLD 25 KW FORD/ONAN MEANT TO SUPPLY EMERGENCY POWER HAS BEEN INOPERATIVE ALMOST FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT EMERGENCY DUE TO ITS AGE, NON-AVAILABILITY OF SPARE PARTS AND LACK OF QUALIFIED MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL IN GEORGETOWN. COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN KEPT IN SERVICE BY USE OF A 50 KW GENERAL MOTORS DIESEL. LOCAL CATERPILLAR REP STATES THAT HE COULD ARRANGE AIR DELIVERY FROM THE FACTORY OF A 3304-T 80 KW GENERATOR AT A PRICE APPROXIMATELY IN THE TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLAR RANGE. BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO PLACE AN ORDER.

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(B) EMBASSY ANNEX (CONSULATE) (CURRENTLY HAS NO
EMERGENCY POWER SOURCE)-INSTALLATION OF APPROPRIATE
UNIT. (C) JFK LIBRARY (HAS NO EMERGENCY SOURCE)-
INSTALLATION OF APPROPRIATE UNIT. (D) AID OFFICE
HAS SMALL UNIT WHICH SUPPLIES EMERGENCY LIGHTING-
INSTALLATION OF LARGER UNIT. (E) RESIDENCE COMPOUND
(3 USG OWNED HOUSES)-REPLACEMENT OF 2KW GENERATOR
BY UNIT CAPABLE OF SUPPLYING ALL THREE RESIDENCES.
(F) LEASED RESIDENCES-PROCUREMENT OF APPROPRIATE
SIZE PORTABLE GENERATORS FOR ALL STATE/AID/ICA SHORT
TERM HOUSES.

6. AS RESULT OF DIFFICULTIES DESCRIBED ABOVE AND IN

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PREVIOUS CABLES, AND LIKELIHOOD GOG WILL NOT IMMEDIATELY
RESOLVE ELECTRICAL POWER CRISIS, REQUEST ARA/MGT,
OPR/ST, AND APPROPRIATE AID AND ICA OFFICES BE READY ON
SHORT NOTICE TO MOUNT CONSOLIDATED EFFORT TO FUND,
IDENTIFY SOURCES, AND PREPARE TO PROCURE AND SHIP UPON
FIRM REQUEST FROM EMBASSY THE FOLLOWING: (A) WATER
PURIFICATION EQUIPMENT (FOR CENTRAL LOCATION IN
CHANCERY) TO PRODUCE MINIMUM TWENTY GALLONS PURE WATER
PER DAY FROM EXTREMELY RAW SOURCE (BACTERIA, WORMS,
HIGH SALINITY). (B) PORTABLE STOVES (PROPANE, IF IT
CAN BE AIR SHIPPED) WITH ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FUEL REFILLS
(KEROSENE AND OTHER WHITE GAS IS NOT AND WILL NOT BE
AVAILABLE). (C) DEHYDRATED FOODS-MERCHANTS
TRADITIONALLY MEAGER SUPPLIES ARE ALREADY DISAPPEARING
FROM SHELVES; CHANCES FOR RESUPPLY ARE SMALL AT BEST.
(D) MEDICINES-OUR FROZEN VACCINES HAVE ALREADY BEEN
LOST AND OTHERS REMAIN IN JEOPARDY WHILE POWER PROBLEMS
PERSIST. (E) BATTERY OPERATED SMOKE DETECTORS-USE
OF CANDLES, FLAMMABLE STOVES AND LAMPS IN RESIDENCES
WILL INCREASE POSSIBILITY OF FIRE.

7. FOR ARA/MGT-SUGGEST BUREAU CONSULT WITH AF/EX
RE ITS EXPERIENCE STAFFING AND SUPPLYING AFRICAN POSTS
FACED WITH SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES.

BURKE

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Message Attributes

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